

Reasons Of Nurses In Pursuing Professional Advancement

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine why nurses in a government hospital in Laoag City, Philippines pursue professional advancement. Specifically, it attempted to identify the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their attendance to graduate school studies, seminars, symposia, trainings and workshops using the descriptive research design. The study found that most of the respondents are young adults, females, Roman Catholic and with an average income. Each nurse handles an average of 31-40 patients for eight hours a day. Most of the respondents have not attended graduate school classes; are classified as Nurse I and attended at most five seminars, symposia, trainings and workshops at the local level; only a few have attended symposia, trainings and workshops at the regional and national levels. Most of the respondents agreed that their occupational reason in attending professional advancement is for professional growth and to be updated on trends in nursing. Personal reason includes for self-development and to learn new things and ideas. As to support system, most of them were supported by their immediate superiors and that they shoulder their own expenses in attending professional advancement.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is defined as an art and science which involves whole patient – body, mind and spirit; promotes spiritual, mental and physical health by teaching and by example; stress health education and health preservation as ministration to the sick; involves care of the patient's environment – social and spiritual as well as physical and gives health services to the family and the community as well as to the individual (Kelly, 1992).

The nursing profession, like any other profession, is in a state of change and development. The discovery of new techniques in the care of clients and the creation of innovative equipment in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases impose the need for nurses to keep themselves abreast of new trends. Considering the nature of the nursing profession, especially for institutional nurses working in hospitals or clinics, a continuous training and education regarding client care techniques and procedures is a must.

Learning, it is said, is a continuous process. Different skills necessary for the care of clients

are being learned and mastered through indulging one's self in the different ways of professional development. In the process of acquiring broader and more comprehensive knowledge and skills necessary in rendering appropriate and effective nursing interventions to clients, the nurse is being affected by different factors, which could either serve as motivators or barriers in the said process.

This study was conducted in an attempt to determine the different reasons that encourage nurses to advance professionally. The researcher has been motivated to conduct this study because of the inevitable need for nurses to keep themselves competent in the different aspects of nursing practice.

The study was specifically geared towards the process of solving the following problems:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents as to: age, sex, religion, civil status, income, position and workload?
2. Are the nurses attending graduate school? What is the number of seminars, symposia, trainings and workshops attended by the respondents?

3. Why do nurses pursue their professional advancement as to occupational reasons and personal reasons?
4. Who are the significant others that encourages them and provide support to the respondents to pursue their professional advancement?

METHODS

The Hierarchy of Needs Motivational Theory conceptualized by Abraham Maslow served as the primary foundation of this study. This theory remains valid as of today for understanding human motivation, management training and personal development. Indeed, Maslow's idea surrounding the Hierarchy of Needs concerning the responsibility of employers to provide the workplace environment that encourages employees to fulfil their own unique potential (self-actualization) are today more relevant than ever. Many people consider Maslow's original five-stage Hierarchy of Needs model to be definitive and perfectly adequate as a concept. According to the said model, each of us is motivated by needs. It is only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional wellbeing are satisfied are we concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development. Conversely, if the things that satisfy our lower needs are swept away, we are no longer concerned about the maintenance of our higher order needs. Based on this model, it is therefore an innate characteristic of an individual to seek for the fulfilment of every stage to reach the highest level of the hierarchy of needs.

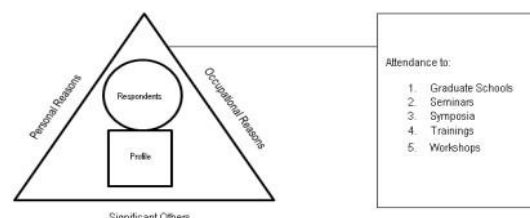
Using this theory in this research study, a person has an instinctive desire to move to the next level if and only if the needs in the lower level are met. This research study focuses on the fourth and fifth stages of the hierarchy, which are the self-esteem needs and self-actualization. In the need of an individual to move on to these levels, certain factors can possibly affect his willingness to strive harder and reach his maximum potential. These factors include his socio-demographic profile, occupational factors, personal factors and the presence of adequate support systems.

The Achievement Motivation Theory by David McClelland is also used in this study

particularly one aspect of his theory, which is the Need for Achievement. In the need of an individual to make significant accomplishment and to master his skills, he tends to do tasks in order for him to achieve it. Also, the abovementioned factors can affect the process of achieving such accomplishments. The Behavioral Systems Model by Dorothy Johnson and the 14 Basic Needs by Virginia Henderson are also used in this research study. These theories also explain why a person has the instinct to move and advance himself. Both of these theories also state that a person has the need to gain mastery of the things around him and his environment and to gain meaningful accomplishments.

Also, the process of achieving these accomplishments and mastering the environment is being affected by the different factors mentioned earlier. The connection of these factors to the attainment of mastery, in boosting the person's self-esteem and to have self-actualization is reflected in the paradigm presented below. The figure has an equally sided triangle that encases a human-shaped figure. The triangle is connected to a square that encases the different means on how nurses can advance themselves professionally.

The sides of a triangle represent the different reasons of nurses to pursue their professional advancement. The sides are equal in length which indicates that those mentioned reasons are equally affecting the nurse. The human-shaped figure inside represents the respondents with their socio-demographic profile. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents with the different reasons are linked to the different means of professional development with a line that indicates a connection and not a relationship.



The method employed in this study was the descriptive-survey type of research design. Descriptive method involves description, recording, analysis and interpretation of the person, nature, the composition and the process or phenomena. It seeks to know the characteristics of the phenomenon or event

and categorize it into some descriptive variables. It does not explain relationships but seeks knowledge for better understanding of the nature of the subject of the study to serve as basis for some future actions including formation of hypothesis of relationship.

A research developed questionnaire was the primary tool employed in data collection. The profiles of the nurses involved were treated using frequency distribution and percentage in which the percentage formula was: $\text{Percentage (5)} = x/n (100\%)$

Where:

x=Frequency

n=Number of Respondents

The responses were treated using frequency counts and percentage using the same formula above. However, they were ranked from the highest occurring frequency to the least occurring frequency.

FINDINGS

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age. Most of the respondents belong to the age bracket of 18-29 years old with 15 nurses or 51.72% of the respondents. It was also observed that 14 or 28.28% of the respondents belong to an age range of 30-60 years old. According to Havighurst's developmental task, an individual is considered to be in early adulthood if he or she belongs to age range within 19-30 years old and that individual is getting started in an occupation and taking on civic activity. On the other hand, middle adulthood or those whose age range from 30-60 years old, would want to reach and maintain satisfactory performance in their occupational career as an evidence of attending different professional advancement. In early adulthood, men naturally starts to learn independency through engaging in work, coping with a new environment and separates self from family to start a life of his/her own.

Sex. Majority of the respondents were female obtaining a percentage of 65.5% or 19 respondents while male composed of 10 or 34.5% of the respondents. According to Kozier (2007), traditional female roles of wife, mother, daughter and sister have always included the care and nurturing of other members. From the beginning, women have always cared for infants and children. In addition, women also cared for ill members of the community. It has become a tradition that the female is usually the nurse of every

individual whether sick or well. This implies that most females pursue the nursing profession more than males, which is very evident nowadays.

Religion. Most of the respondents were Roman Catholics with 23 or 79.3% of the respondents. Three respondents or 10.34% were Aglipayans while one respondent was a Protestant, Iglesia ni Cristo and Pentecost with 3.45% each.

Civil Status. Eighteen or 62.07% of the respondents were single. On the other hand 11 or 37.93% were married. This is in accordance with the developmental tasks of Havighurst that in early adulthood, the developmental tasks that an individual is undergoing includes selecting a mate and starting to have a family.

Monthly Income. Most of the respondents 15 (51.73%) have a total monthly income of Php 6000-10999; 10 (34.38%) have a monthly income of Php 11000-15999; 4 (13.79%) have Php 16000-20999; no respondent belonged to income bracket of 5999 and below and 21000 and above. The result indicates that majority of the respondents have an average monthly income living above poverty line set by the National Economic Development Authority which is Php 8000 per month for a family. In relation with the position of the respondents, most of them are Nurse I who receives Php 9000-11000 a month. This is the reason why nurses do not have enough income to support themselves to attend professional advancement.

Position. Most of the respondents are Nurse I with 68.97%. Five or 17.24% of them are Casual Nurse and the rest are Nurse II with 13.79% or 4 respondents. The high number of respondents having the position Nurse I is explained by the increasing number of professional nurses produced and go abroad on their own. According to the Chief Nurse of the hospital, there are only five casual nurses. These nurses serve as substitutes to those who are on leave. The Nurse II are the supervisors of the hospital.

Number of Patients Handled. Thirteen or 44.83% of the respondents handle patients at the range of 31-40 patients in an eight-hour duty. Seven or 24.14% of them handle 51-60 patients, five or 17.24% of them for 41-50 patients and lastly the remaining four or 13.79% respondents handle 20-30 patients. The result indicates that most of the respondents handle patients at a range of 31-40 patients. During a whole day shift, one nurse handles seven patients. This also

depends on the number of patients that are admitted in the institution and the bed capacity of the hospital which is 100 bed capacity.

Hours of Duty. All of the respondents have eight-hour duty. In accordance with Republic Act No. 73056 (The Magna Carta for Public Health Workers) Section 15, the normal working hours of any public health worker shall not exceed eight hours or 40 hours per week. The said working hours is also stated in the Labor Law that all government officials should render service of 40 hours a week.

Attendance to Graduate School, Numbers of Attended Seminars, Symposia, Trainings and Workshop

Attendance to Graduate School. Eight or 27.59% of the respondents have attended graduate school and 21 or 72.41% of the respondents have not attended.

Local Level. Twenty-one or 72.41% of the respondents have attended an average of five seminars. Followed by at most 10 seminars in which four or 13.79% of them had attended. Lastly two respondents have never attended any seminar throughout their service while two or 6.90% of the respondents have attended at most 15 seminars.

Symposia. Twenty or 68.97% have attended an average of five symposia. Five or 17.24% of the respondents had not attended any symposia. And the rest which is 4 or 13.79% of the respondents had attended at most 10 symposia.

Training. With regards to training, most of them or 68.97% of the respondents have attended at most five trainings. Five or 17.24% of them have not yet attended training.

Workshops. As to the workshops that the respondents have attended, 17 or 58.62% of them have attended an average of five workshops. Eleven or 37.893% of them have not yet attended the said activity. Lastly, one or 3.45% of them have attended an average of 10 workshops.

DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents have attended seminars, symposia, training and workshops in the local level. These were held inside the institution or just within the setting (Laoag City). Almost all of the respondents have attended at least one and this number has a distant gap to those respondents who have attended at least eleven and those who have never attended such. This is due to the place

wherein the professional advancement is held and time being consumed by the professional advancement. As to the regional level, the number of seminars, trainings and workshops that the respondents have attended is almost twice of those who have never attended symposia. At the national level, the respondents who never attended any professional advancement far outnumber those who have attended at least one. This implies that, as the activities are held to a higher level, the number of respondents attending the advancement is decreasing. This is in relation to the primary problem (support system) of the respondents for them to go and attend. This is supported by the verbalization of one of the respondents that in as much as she wants to attend or engage herself with such activities, she doesn't have money to support herself. Also, in relation to the trainings, most of the respondents had not attended the trainings at national level because training involves the process of teaching or learning skills which takes days, weeks or may even reach up to a month which will consume time and money.

Nowadays, personalities giving study grants are no longer active and that nurses who are interested to attend the advancements can do nothing. It is no longer necessary to attend professional advancements like seminars, trainings, etc. in the national level as long as there are seminars, trainings, etc. conducted locally as in the hospital hosted by hospital administrators or nursing service. Nurses overlook the importance of such as they focus more on their family most especially to respondents who have children. They better attend family needs rather than attending professional advancement.

Occupational Reasons

The occupational reason that has the highest frequency or with a percentage of 89.7% is for professional growth and then for them to be updated of new trends in nursing with a frequency of 19 or 65.5% and lastly is for them to have security of tenure and to comply with licensure examination with a frequency of 7 or 24.1%.

This clearly presents that nurses want to enhance their skills professionally. This is further supported by Venzon (2010) that one of the specific objectives of continuing education is to further enhance the skills of nurses to provide quality patient care. To be updated of new trends in nursing which is the second reason is also supported by Venzon

(2005) who said that one of the specific objectives of continuing education is to be updated of new concepts, knowledge and techniques that relate to nursing care.

Last in rank is to comply with the licensure examination and for security of tenure. As stated in the book of Venzon (2010), in the year 1988 all Filipinos were required to renew their PRC license with 60 contact hours per 3 years. However, per PRC Resolution No. 99-624 dated August 11, 1999 which repealed Article V of PRC Resolution No. 507 s 1997, continuing education is no longer required for re-licensure. Although nurses are still encouraged to pursue continuing education as it is an ethical obligation to enhance their knowledge, attitudes and skills for competent and safe care.

Personal Reason

It is necessary, according to the respondents, for them to attend some professional advancement in order for them to learn new things and ideas to render quality health care to the patients. This is supported by Kozier (2005) who said that continuing education is designed to meet needs such as to provide nurses with information essential to nursing practice and to keep nurses abreast of new knowledge. Second in rank is to be updated of new trends in nursing. As mentioned in Fundamentals of Nursing (2004), the purpose of continuing education is to keep the nurses updated of new techniques. Due to the advancement of technology, nurses must cope with the changes around them and familiarize themselves with new discoveries in the health profession.

Support System

Superiors and relatives encourage them to attend activities. These people also give their moral support because someday they will be replacing them in their position. Moreover, it is one of the responsibilities of superiors to implement programs in order to improve skills of their subordinates.

Based on the findings and results of this study, most of the respondents have not attended any professional advancement at the national level, The respondents agreed that the occupational reasons that encourage them in attending professional advancement would

include the purpose of professional growth and be updated of new trends in nursing. The respondents agreed that the personal reasons that encourage them to attend professional advancement includes self-development and to learn new things and ideas. Most of the respondents avail of support systems from their immediate supervisors and relatives.

In the light of the findings, it is suggested that hospital administrators must provide allowance and allot time for nurses to attend professional advancement and that they should plan, make programs and conduct more seminars, symposia, trainings and workshops inside the institution or within the city. Hospital administrators should also encourage nurses to advance professionally through information dissemination on new trends and the importance of professional advancement.

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